

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 A-01 OPR-01 SY-04 USSS-00 COME-00

EB-04 INR-05 LAB-01 RSC-01 SIL-01 PM-03 H-01 L-02

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /059 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2878

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 14600

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT OVIP ELAB JA (FORD GERALD R.)

SUBJ: LABOR DISPUTE ACTIVITY THROUGH PERIOD OF PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

REF: TOKYO 14575

1. SUMMARY: LABOR MINISTRY CONFIRMS INFORMATION ON LABOR STRIKE PLANS, BUT EXPECTED ACTIVITIES ARE NOT LIKELY TO HAVE DIRECT IMPACT ON PRESIDENTIAL VISIT. END SUMMARY.

2. GOJ LABOR MINISTRY OFFICIALS NOVEMBER 8 PROVIDED EMBOFFS LATEST ASSESSMENT OF ANTICIPATED LABOR DEMONSTRATIONS AND STRIKE ACTIONS PRECEDING AND DURING PRESIDENTIAL VISIT. NO CHANGE IN DEMO PLANS REPORTED REFTTEL EXCEPT THAT LARGE RALLY IN KYOTO SCHEDULED NOW FOR NOVEMBER 20 (DAY PRIOR PRESIDENTIAL VISIT) INSTEAD OF NOVEMBER 17. FOLLOWING IS SOMEWHAT EXPANDED VERSION OF NOV 13-15 RAIL AND SOHYO-LED NOV 19 FALL LABOR OFFENSIVE IN TRANSPORT AND GOVERNMENT SECTORS.

3. JAPANESE NATIONAL RR (JNR) TIEUPS NOVEMBER 13-15. DESPITE DROPPING OF STRIKE PLANS BY LARGER, MORE MODERATE KOKURO (JNR EMPLOYEES UNION), INTERNAL FACTIONAL POLITICS (ATTACK ON MODERATE MAINSTREAM
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BY ULTRA-RADICAL FACTION) APPEARS TO ASSURE THAT DORO (JNR

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS)

WILL LAUNCH REGIONAL STRIKES DURING PART OR ALL OF THAT 72-HOUR PERIOD. SINCE DORO MEMBERS OPERATE THE TRAINS, 48-HOUR STRIKE PLANNED NOVEMBER 14-15 FOR TOKYO AND OSAKA COMMUTING TRAINS AND SHINKANSEN (BULLET TRAINS) EXPECTED TO BE ALMOST TOTALLY EFFECTIVE.

4. OSTENSIBLE DORO STRIKE AIMS ARE IMPROVED SAFETY AND WORKING CONDITIONS, BUT ANOTHER INTERPRETATION IS THAT UNION TACTICS ARE AIMED AT TURNING BACK MANAGEMENT DEMANDS FOR REDUCED CREW SIZES AND INCREASING PRESSURE FOR YEAR-END BONUS INCREASES.

5. SOHYO'S AUTUMN LABOR STRUGGLE. SOHYO TRANSPORT AND GOVERNMENT WORKERS UNIONS SCHEDULING "UNIFIED" STRIKE ACTION NOVEMBER 19 AS PART OF AUTUMN OFFENSIVE WITH PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE OF WINNING LARGER YEAR-END BONUSES. SLOGANS HAVE POLITICAL CONTENT BUT THEY APPEAR LARGELY IDEOLOGICAL BAGGAGE: ANTI-INFLATION, PROTECT THE LOW-PAID WORKERS, AND OVERTHROW TANAKA. ANTI-FORD VISIT SLOGAN APPEARS ALSO BUT CLEARLY SECONDARY.

6. TRANSPORT STRIKES NOVEMBER 19. KOKURO PLANS STRIKE UNTIL NOON ON TOKYO AND OSAKA COMMUTER LINES AND AT SELECTED TICKET COUNTERS NATIONWIDE, PLUS FULL DAY SHINKANSEN STRIKE. DORO PLANS FULL DAY STRIKE ON TOKYO AND OSAKA COMMUTER LINES. SHITETSU SOREN (PRIVATE RR WORKERS UNION) PLANS 24-HOUR WALKOUT ON ALL MAJOR LINES, BUT THIS COULD BE SHORTENED OR CANCELLED ON SOME OR ALL LINES DEPENDING ON PROGRESS IN YEAR-END BONUS NEGOTIATIONS. OTHER TRANSPORT WORKERS UNIONS PLAN STRIKES BUT UNIONS ARE NOT STRONG AND THEIR PLANS STILL FLUID--PERHAPS DEPENDING ON FINAL SHITETSU SOREN ACTION. IN ANY CASE, 5-7:00 A.M. MUNICIPAL TRANSPORT STRIKE, POSSIBLE STOPPAGE BY WEAK TRUCKING AND TAXI UNIONS, AND MAXIMUM OF ONE DAY EXPRESS AND HARBOR WALKOUTS EXPECTED TO CAUSE LITTLE CONFUSION IN THEMSELVES.

7. GOVERNMENT WORKERS. POSTAL, TELECOMMUNICATION AND SOME OTHER PUBLIC CORPORATION AND NATIONAL ENTERPRISE WORKERS WILL WALK OUT IN SELECTED LOCATIONS. SOME NIKKYOSO (TEACHERS) WILL WALKOUT 29 MINUTES (TO PREVENT SACRIFICING PAY BY RUNNING OVER 30
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MINUTE LIMIT FOR NON-APPROVED BREAK).

8. COMMENT: DESPITE OBVIOUS RELEVANCE OF THESE ACTIVITIES FOR PRESIDENTIAL VISIT, MINISTRY BELIEVES TRADE UNION FOCUS IS ON ECONOMICS FAR MORE THAN POLITICS. FOR MOST UNIONISTS, THEREFORE, NOVEMBER 19 IS WARM-UP FOR MORE INTENSIVE AGITATION EXPECTED IN LATE NOVEMBER OR DECEMBER, WHEN DIET RECONVENES TO PASS

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET DIRECTLY AFFECTING PAY OF GOVERNMENT WORKERS.
WE EXPECT LABOR STRIKES TO HAVE NO DIRECT IMPACT ON THE
VISIT.
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